



Office of the
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Key victory for minority language health care services

It is with great satisfaction that the Commissioner of Official Languages, Dr. Dyane Adam, welcomed the unanimous decision today by the Ontario Court of Appeal in the Montfort case. The Court ruled in favour of the Montfort Hospital which is a key health care resource for members of the Franco-Ontarian community.

The Commissioner began by congratulating SOS Montfort, Madame Gisèle Lalonde, and the Montfort Hospital for their clear-sightedness, courage and determination.

Access to health care in one's official language is of great importance for the English and French language minority communities across the country. The judgment recognises that in deciding to limit the Montfort Hospital's role as a community health services provider, the directions adopted by the Ontario government violated the fundamental constitutional principle of respect for and protection of minorities.

Dr. Adam is pleased that the Court of Appeal clearly recognised the essential role played by the Montfort Hospital as an important linguistic, cultural and educational institution that is vital to the development and well being of the Franco-Ontarian community.

For the Commissioner, this decision also serves as an important reminder that when our governments make decisions in the public interest, they must consider the fundamental principle of the protection of minorities. Official language minority communities should not bear the heavy burden of initiating court actions to remind governments of their responsibilities.

According to the Commissioner, "The fabric of a society in general depends upon its institutions. This is particularly so for minority language communities who depend on their institutions, such as schools and hospitals, to ensure their continuing vitality. One should not disregard the importance for the members of these communities of access to quality health care that reflects the cultural and linguistic realities of their lives."

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Information

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